

MOON PICTURES, VAUDEVILLE AND GOSSIP OF THE THEATERS

High Lights and Shadows on News of Motion Pictures

Griffith's 'Orphans of the Storm' Pictorially Stirring and Impressionable.

By FRANK VREELAND.

HERE are so many things to be said about David W. Griffith's latest production, "Orphans of the Storm," which reopened the issue of the French Revolution at the Apollo Theater last week, that one review cannot hold them all, especially when hustled together late at night with one eye fighting the clock. That is part of the importance of Griffith: he packs his pictures with so many significant details that reviewers have no right on thinking and saying things about him for weeks afterward, whether they will or no. His own productive fertility is one of his best sources of advertisement.

At bottom the picture has a diffusion of dramatic interest, though the spectator may not be exactly aware of it at the time and it may almost require psycho-analysis to bring that thought from cover. This diffusion is not due to the fact that Griffith keeps the narrative running in several parallels, a modified form of the method he used in its extreme variety in "Intolerance," so that the story assumes the character of a quadrangle equation and part of the interest clusters about the query whether both sides of the problem will be solved simultaneously at the finish.

No; in this exposition of film algebra x and y emerge very patly at the end from the struggle with the numerous figures, great as they are in the mob factors. Moreover, the interest is sharply sustained in each thread of narrative, so that it never snaps. Dramatically, each of the concurrent episodes is sufficient unto itself—almost any other director would admit himself that he couldn't improve on his histrionic appeal. The search of *Henriette* for her blind foster sister, *Louise*, and the moment of recognition, are surely among the most poignant elements a photograph could have—one wouldn't want them any more harrowing, for the sake of one's feelings.

The diffusion lay in the fact that there was no single dominant protagonist, no one human factor that stood out all through the picture as being bent upon the destruction of the two fluttering little country butterflies for the sake of a dramatic climax. First it is the *Marquis de Praille*, who pays upon them; then it is *Mère Frochard*, next the *Count de Linieres* sets himself against them; presently the rabble sweeps them along and interferes with their destiny, and finally it is the malignant *Robespierre* who seeks to administer the coup de grace through the guillotine. Amidst all these divergent agencies no one seems to have a monopoly on being the hand of fate. There is no single personality who is fought by them, who is out to crush them for whatever satisfaction he can get out of it.

The general impression one gains from these various cross currents of the picture is that of two little war bugs heaving sweat alone on the tide of great forces, which is a fine conception in a symbolic way, but is so impersonal that some spectators may notice more history than romance in it. It is exactly what Griffith touched upon in his written introduction when he said something about this being a story dealing with two weak straws ground between the upper and the nether millstones of tyranny.

The idea becomes all the more pointed by contrast with "All for a Woman," the German picture in which the antagonism between those two very vivid figures, Danton and Robespierre, becomes the supreme concern, and one is so enthralled by the struggle between these two that one forgets history and gages: "Who will win?" In "Orphans of the Storm" that hostility is treated on the whole in a casual manner as incidental to the enveloping conflict of forces—the kind of thing that *Henri Bergson* loves to write about.

Whether one loves to envisage such a conflict is a matter of taste, where arguments should cease—though they generally begin. This method of handling does not necessarily vitiate the drama, especially if one can get excited about the abstract. Certainly Griffith has made his theme so pictorially stirring that impressionable spectators will have to repeat to themselves feverishly: "Gosh, it's only a movie." Kate Claxton, by arrangement with whom this adaptation of "The Two Orphans" was made, witnessed the premiere presentation the other night and applauded resoundingly, and from her decision there would seem to be no appeal.

To vivify his theme Griffith had recourse to a series of expedients which, while exciting in themselves, sometimes seemed to give a peep at the machinery in action. One of these was the thunderous ride of the rescuing cavalcade toward the guillotine, for which the trade secret seemed to have been given away by "The Birth of a Nation." Here *Monte Blue* gave a thrilling suggestion of Paul Revere establishing records. It captures one so that afterward one rides the subway with a gallant bounce.

Others of these fictitious aids are the battle and mob scenes, though it must be confessed that the fight before the Bastille did not give one the sense of stunned wonder which the rescue scene did. Perhaps because too many pains were taken in this combat to show the technique of delivering such blow. But in general the mobs were marvellously well handled, revealing the howling spirit of the Reign of Terror, the utter abandon of ferocity, much better than the hordes in foreign pictures, who were quite obviously drawing pay for waving sticks and were fearful of treading on each other's corns in the unavoidable hurry of battle.

The live quality about Griffith's crowds was effected not only by remarkable close up flashes of groups in the tribune scowling with their hearts torn by the work, but by his separate figures leap or do something distinctive from the ordinary hurried tangle. In this way the multitudes on a rampart in the palaces and performing the wild dance of the carnage took on an individual quality that differentiated them from the ordinary football rush of a mass play in pictures.

That battle before the Bastille, pictorially framed in a window with a Meisner effect, illustrated Griffith's exceptional sense of the logical moment for a scene which, if omitted, would leave a gaping void in the picture. Just when one felt it was high time for the sans culottes to charge they charged. Similarly, just at the opportune point when one demanded a flash back to the scene of the two foster sisters sleeping together as babies, presto! out popped the scene.

The period of the French Revolution,

'Love's Redemption,' 'Foolish Wives' and 'Bride's Play' Filmed



'The Lane That Had No Turning' From Sir Gilbert Parker's Story Also on Screen.

At the Strand Theater beginning to-day will be Miss Norma Talmadge in "Love's Redemption," an adaptation of Andrew Souther's novel "On Principle," which was directed by Albert Parker from the scenario by Anthony Paul Kelly. The plot deals with *Jennie Dobson*, nicknamed "Ginger," the orphaned daughter of a Spanish opera singer and an Englishman of fortune. The action takes place in Jamaica. Harrison Ford will be seen playing the leading male role opposite the star, while the other members included in the cast are *Montague Love*, *Cooper Cliffe* and *Miss Ida Waterman*. Chief in the subsidiary part of the program is "Edgar" *Miss Marion Davies* in "The Bride's Play."

not in the original, was added to the D'Emery play painfully, though many spectators may have been led to confuse the storm in the title, referring to the Revolution, with the snowstorm that flurried down before the impressive front of Notre Dame with an obviously torn paper effect. The costumes are marvellous and sumptuous, and few more moving scenes have been done than the minute in the garden fête, with one's feet actually being tugged by lace and finery. The settings, while handsome, were far from the stupendous magnificence of the Babylon of "Intolerance," though a pestiferous cloud of underworld life. In the basement of his house there is conducted an establishment which owes its existence to the ignorance of the police.

An old wive was made of color, for every time Griffith espied a candle or a fire he felt it was time to touch it up with a little orange. At the finish, in revealing the hues of her change of position of the upper floors to the den in the basement. What influence the performance of this masterpiece may have on the appointment of a theater censor nobody who has seen or read the play can tell. Opinion is generally inclined to the belief that it will have the effect of hurrying up matters, one way or another.

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Allan Poe," the third of a "Great American Authors" series. The comedy element will be supplied by Mack Sennett's latest, "Be Reasonable." "Foolish Wives," Universal's million dollar motion picture production, written, directed and starred in by *Erich von Stroheim*, opens an indefinite engagement at the Central Theater next Wednesday night. Von Stroheim plays the part of *Alexis Karacalis*, a renegade Russian, and is supported by *Miss du Pont*, a newcomer; *Miss Maude George*, *Rudolph Christians*, *Robert Edeson*, *Miss Mae Bush*, *Cesar Grayini*, *Melvine Polo* and some six thousand other players, many of whom are well known. Five hundred and thirty-six working days were consumed in making "Foolish Wives," and with all of the waste money eliminated the picture is still said to have cost \$1,000,000. A number of the members of the cast are coming East from Los Angeles, including *Von Stroheim*, *Miss George* and *Miss Bush*.

At the Capitol the Goldwyn screen spectacle "Theodora" will be held over for another week. "Orphans of the Storm," D. W. Griffith's latest contribution to the moving picture screen, enters upon the first full week of its engagement at the Apollo to-day. The *Misses Lillian and Dorothy Gish* are featured in the leading roles. The large cast includes *Joseph Schildkraut*, *Miss Lucille La Verne*, *Sheldon Lewis*, *Creighton Hale*, *Morgan Wallace*, *Frank Losee* and *Miss Catharine Emmett*.

The first half of next week the Sheridan will present *Douglas Fairbanks* in "The Three Musketeers," the second half *Clara Kimball Young* in "What No Man Knows." Play, a Cosmopolitan-Paramount picture from an Irish romance by *Donna Byrne*, with settings by *Joseph Urban*, will be the feature at the Rivoli. *Miss Mildred Condine* wrote the scenario and *George W. Terwilliger* directed. *Miss Davies* plays two brides in the picture—*Bridal*, an unhappy bride of the twelfth century, who took advantage of an old custom to escape with the man she loved, and *Alison*, a modern Irish girl, who was snatched from legends and flouted a philanthropist poet. In the medieval scenes *Miss Davies* is supported by *Jack O'Brien* and *Frank Shannon* and in the modern scenes by *Wyndham Standing* and *Carlton Miller*. *Buster Keaton's* comedy "The Playhouse," which was one of the big hits of the Rivoli's birthday anniversary, will be on the Rivoli program.

Cecil B. De Mille's production "Fool's Paradise," an elaboration of *Leonard Merrick's* short story "The Laurels and the Lady," written by *Beulah Marie Dix* and *Sada Cowan*, begins the fifth week of its extended engagement at the Criterion.

Miss Mae Murray in "Peacock Alley" starts her third week in B. S. Moss's new theater, the Cameo.

moved to the Rivoli for another week on Broadway. The orchestra, *Frederick Stahlgaber* and *Emanuel Baer* conducting, will interpret the *Bisect* music which has been matched into the picture scenes in addition to *Victor Krieger*, prima ballerina of the Moscow Grand Opera, will appear for a second week of dance on the Rivoli stage.

The feature of the Strand musical program will be *Herbert Waterous*, basson, who returns to the concert stage after an absence of nearly two years. For the overture Musical Director *Carl Eduard* has arranged Enrico's "Rhapsodie Romantique," which will be played by the orchestra. There will be a prologue to the feature picture in which *Richard Bold*, tenor, will be the principal soloist. The organ solo will be played by *Percy J. Starnes* and *Ralph S. Brainard*.

The musical frame for "Theodora" at the Capitol will be held over for a second week with this picture.

The Rivoli program opens with *Paul Dukas's* "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," played by the orchestra, with *Rigo Riesenfeld* and *Joseph Littau* conducting. *Maurice Cass*, who has spoken the prologue at former performances of this atmospheric composition based on *Goethe's* poem, will appear again in the part. *Miss Betty Andersen* will have a soprano solo number.

Each college may send out not more than thirty men, all strictly undergraduates, and each club sings three selections, one light, one piece song and one college song. The singing of the songs is judged on the scale of 100 points, 30 for the light song, 50 for the piece song and 20 for the college song, the results being judged on tone, diction, ensemble, interpretation and pitch.

Tickets may be obtained for the contest from *Albert F. Pickernell*, president Intercollegiate Musical Corporation, 422 Fulton street, Brooklyn.

The success of the reditied "Carmen," with *Miss Geraldine Farrar* and *Wallace Reid*, at the Rivoli, has caused it to be

the theater," he murmured rhapsodically. "Suggestion, rather than any literal transcript of life. A beautiful and artistic intimation of the forest than any copy of the exact painting in the old studio picture which used to be set up on the stage and called nature. It was not even art. But see the pale metallic hint of sky, the brown lines so delicately traced over the surface to hint that the naked branches are intertwining against the springtime heavens, the almost inextinguishable lines to indicate the young twigs. That is the new stage art at its best."

The voice of the manager addressing the group put an end to his ravings. "Sorry about that back drop," he said, "but it was the best we could do at such short notice. It was all wrinkled to begin with, but this morning it dropped and the dust on the stage made all have on the appointment of a theater censor nobody who has seen or read the play can tell. Opinion is generally inclined to the belief that it will have the effect of hurrying up matters, one way or another."

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With the family of the proprietor on the floors above dwells the daughter, who is the pride of his life. The play tells the story of her change of position of the upper floors to the den in the basement. What influence the performance of this masterpiece may have on the appointment of a theater censor nobody who has seen or read the play can tell. Opinion is generally inclined to the belief that it will have the effect of hurrying up matters, one way or another.

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The prospect of a long period of inactivity in the theater is leading the actors to cooperate in the formation of stock companies. One of the latest of these, organized by *Forrest Winant*, will appear in Plainfield, N. J. The association of players which occupied the National Theater for a brief period in "Trilby" will not resume its activities.

New Art in Back Drops. It was the pale blue drop at the last Maeterlinck matinee which aroused the enthusiasm of the young critic the other afternoon.

"Wonderful example of the new art of